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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 NAIROBI 000784

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [MARR](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - TFG PRIME MINISTER REPORTS ON EFFORTS  
WITH GOVERNMENT OPPONENTS

REF: A. NAIROBI 782

[1](#)B. NAIROBI 773

Classified By: Ambassador Michael Ranneberger. Reasons: 1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke had a long tour d'horizon discussion with the Ambassador and Mission team on April 16. He stressed that the TFG's highest priority is establishing the Joint Security Force, and emphasized the need for urgent international support for this effort. He made clear the TFG's desire to maintain and strengthen its relationship with the U.S. He described his government's concerted efforts to win over or neutralize its opponents. Significant progress had been made with Hisbul Islam and, with the Parliament's expected endorsement of sharia law, Sharmarke believes there will be substantial defection of youth from the al-Shabaab. Sharmarke's performance during the meeting with the Ambassador dispelled speculation at his time of appointment that lack of experience and clout in Mogadishu would make him little more than a figurehead. The Prime Minister was engaged, had a strategy for TFG success, and highlighted his close working relationship with President Sharif. We helped facilitate a productive meeting between the PM and the Puntland Administration President April 15 (ref a). End summary.

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Security  
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[1](#)2. (C) Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Omar Sharmarke described to the Ambassador April 16 the efforts his government is making to bolster its authority and legitimacy. The April 15 - 16 visit to Nairobi marked the first time the Prime Minister has been absent from Mogadishu since the appointment of his cabinet in late February. (After a brief visit to Addis Ababa, Sharmarke planned to return to Mogadishu April 22.) The Ambassador reviewed U.S. policy, emphasizing the U.S. desire for a close working relationship with the TFG. The Ambassador discussed the support which we are providing for security and development, and indicated that we recognize the need for the international community to do more.

[1](#)3. (C) The Prime Minister told the Ambassador that the TFG is working hard to standing up a joint security force, as its first priority, but needs more international support. About four thousand soldiers have been issued identification, and an additional 570 Ugandan-trained troops are expected imminently. Money for the security forces is coming from revenues collected at the port and through other sources.

The TFG collected \$1,700,000 in March, more than expected. A government oversight committee has been constituted to administer the revenues, and part of that amount is going to security. Still, substantial international support is required in order to make the joint security force viable.

14. (C) Sharmarke estimated that the TFG has 8,000 troops in need of training. We reviewed with Sharmarke the points on the security forces provided by Washington. Sharmarke stressed the importance of training forces outside Somalia, and mentioned Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, Djibouti, Yemen, and Sudan as potential sites. (The Ambassador discouraged Sudan and advised caution in proceeding with Yemen; Sharmarke said he understood.) A small group of officers is scheduled to begin training imminently in Djibouti and Uganda, the Prime Minister said. He projected that the number of joint security forces on the ground could swell, if revenues could be found, to ten thousand within eight months. The command structures of the former Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) and TFG are gradually being integrated.

15. (C) The troops are poorly equipped. The TFG is seeking sources of military hardware, which would allow the TFG to outgun its opponents, especially al-Shabaab, which has acquired more sophisticated weapons using ransom payments. The Prime Minister complained that the UN arms embargo is a major impediment to progress and that getting a waiver from the United Nations for the import of arms is a cumbersome process. (UN Monitoring Group on Somalia Coordinator for

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UNSCR 1811 Matt Bryden subsequently told Somalia Unit that the process requires only notification to the UN from the donor country and a five-day waiting period. We have arranged for Bryden to brief the Prime Minister on the monitoring regime.)

16. (C) The Ambassador briefed Sharmarke on the \$10 million the U.S. is providing and indicated that we are pressing others to assist. He also pointed out that we support the SRSG's efforts to have support for the Joint Security Force added to the agenda for the Brussels meeting, since support for the force and AMISOM are complementary requirements. In the absence of additional international support, Sharmarke said, the TFG is subsisting on available revenues and other sources of funding. Sharmarke said that an oversight committee has been formed to administer the revenues and has drafted a three-month interim budget. Joint security forces have received payments for March. Part of the revenues received have been allocated to their financing for the next three months.

17. (C) Sharmarke described the current security situation in Mogadishu as one of "relative peace" due largely to the efforts the TFG has been making to reach out to those opposing the TFG. He credited the TFG's move to implement sharia law as undermining youth support for al-Shabaab.

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Need for Development Aid  
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18. (C) Sharmarke stressed the need for the TFG to "show practical results," specifically with respect to social programs and infrastructure development. Sharmarke noted the need for robust youth employment and skills training, a formal DDR program, efforts to re-open schools, and to repair roads. Roads without potholes are harder to plant IEDs in, he remarked. We briefed Sharmarke on USG assistance programs, including youth employment programs and other development programs underway in south central Somalia. We noted that further stabilization in Mogadishu will open possibilities for expanded U.S. assistance. The Ambassador recommended, and Sharmarke agreed, that senior members of his

team sit down with the Somalia Unit and USAID to work out agreed priorities. We also made clear that we will continue to press other donors to do more to support the TFG.

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IDPs Returning, But Need Help  
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¶9. (C) The Prime Minister also emphasized the need to support and encourage the IDPs returning to Mogadishu. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Sharif Hassan Adan, who was present at the meeting with Ambassador, echoed this sentiment, noting that more want to return to their homes but they fear there will be no food or water. Hassan said that IDP returns are an important step in the process of building peace and that encouraging stability and development in Mogadishu will help undermine al-Shabaab. Hassan said the public have, in a number of cases, deterred al-Shabaab from carrying out mortar attacks. Hassan concluded that "there is no better time to defeat al-Shabaab; the public is turning against them."

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Public Diplomacy  
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¶10. (C) The Ambassador pointed out that it is critical to work together to develop a comprehensive and coordinated public diplomacy strategy to present a positive picture of the TFG and its accomplishments, to present U.S. engagement in a constructive way, and thus to counter al-Shabaab. Sharmarke agreed to send his senior information officials to Nairobi to concert strategy with the Somalia Unit and the Mission public affairs team.

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Sharia Law to be Adopted April 18  
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¶11. (C) A key part of that strategy, said the Prime Minister, is the TFG's decision to implement Sharia law. Parliament is scheduled to endorse Sharia on April 18, and Sharmarke predicted that its formal adoption will help persuade some of the rank-and-file youth to leave al-Shabaab (ref b). The Ambassador expressed concerns that the adoption of a "moderate" version of sharia as envisaged by Sharmarke and President Sharif, could be the start of a slippery slope, as hard-liners press for more. Sharmarke said that he and the President are seeking to pre-empt this through close consultation with moderate Islamic scholars. Eventually, Sharmarke said, whatever is adopted will need to go to a popular referendum. "There will be no amputations or stonings," Sharmarke said.

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Reaching Out to TFG Opponents  
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¶12. (C) Sharmarke said that since taking office he and President Sharif have consistently engaged in outreach to the those opposing the TFG. He told the Ambassador that it is only the Office of the President and his office that are managing these negotiations, using emissaries with clan ties as intermediaries. They have successfully persuaded warlord Indha Adde to sever ties with Hisbul Islam, although Indha Adde had not yet formally affiliated with the TFG. A serious setback to the TFG's effort was the April 15 assassination of MP Abdullahi Isse Aptidon (Hawiye/Duduble). Although it is not clear who was responsible, it was Aptidon, Sharmarke said, who was the key TFG intermediary with Hisbul Islam's Omar Iman. The MP was the second person in Sharmarke's office who has been assassinated recently. (The first was National Commission for Reconciliation Chairman Abdirahman Mohamud "Shifti," who was assassinated on March 31.)

Sharmarke told us that family and clan ties are the key to undercutting the opposition and fostering reconciliation. By way of illustration, the PM noted that he is the cousin of al-Shabaab ringleader Abdullahi Ali Hashi. The PM said that most of the conflict is based on ego, not political issues, and that his government can not offer everyone a leadership position.

¶13. (C) The Prime Minister said that as early as April 18, after arliament adopts Sharia law, he expects that Indha Adde will formally part ways with Hisbul Islam. Adde's defection will further isolate Omar Iman, who is dependent on Adde's forces for protection, and will terminally weaken Hisbul Islam. In response to a question from the Ambassador, Sharmarke said that Robow is "not that far away," now that he was under pressure from al-Shabaab after meeting fierce resistance from communities within the Bay region. With Sharmarke nodding agreement, Deputy PM Hassan added that it is better for Robow to stay "outside the tent." The Ambassador agreed.

¶14. (C) Sharmarke told the Ambassador that he believes Hassan al-Turki is "ready for retirement." His mantle has been inherited by former Kismayo Mayor Ahmed "Madobe," who is rapidly gaining influence in Kismayo. Sharmarke and Hassan joined other TFG contacts in contending that Madobe's public renunciation of the TFG, after President Sharif's success in freeing him during his January visit to Addis, was calculated to win him credibility with hard-liners in Kismayo, and will not be contested by the TFG. Sharmarke joined others with whom we have spoken recently in predicting that violence could erupt in Kismayo at any time.

¶15. (C) The Kismayo port remains a major source of income for al-Shabaab, Sharmarke said, and al-Shabaab is prepared to fight for its continued revenues. Al-Shabaab cares less who is installed in Kismayo's administration. The Prime Minister expressed concerns about the recent arrival of foreigners in Kismayo. He estimated that there are now at least 300 in the city, many of whom may have come directly from Kenya by means of charter flights. Somalia's Ambassador to Kenya said the charter flights violate a GOK - Somalia government agreement requiring all air travelers to have Somali visas before departure. The Ambassador said that we will follow up with the Kenyan government.

¶16. (C) Sharmarke reported only perfunctory attempts to

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reach out to Hassan Dahir Aweys, mainly through his cousin in Mogadishu. The PM said that outreach attempts have been frustrated because Aweys is under pressure from Eritrea not to associate with TFG interlocutors. Sharmarke noted Aweys' recent silence on events in Somalia, and suggested that it is evidence of his isolation. Aweys will never come on board, Sharmarke said.

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Relations with Puntland  
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¶17. (C) The Prime Minister said that he and Puntland Administration President Mohamud "Farooole" had an excellent three-hour meeting the night before (Ref a is a report of Ambassador's meeting with Farooole.) (The leaders arranged to meet with each other after us encouraging them to do so.) They discussed federalism, and he allayed Farooole's concern that a new government of national unity would change the contemplated federal structure of Somalia. Sharmarke said he reassured the Puntland leaders that the Charter and the system remain the same. Together they explored avenues of mutual concern, including revenue sharing, TFG support for Puntland projects, and joint efforts to create a national security force.

¶18. (C) The leaders discussed plans to develop a joint strategic plan to address piracy by immediately building a coast guard and joint security force, creating alternative income generation opportunities in central areas, and addressing illegal fishing. Sharmarke concluded that this was an opportune moment to seal a more productive relationship with Puntland. The PM and Deputy PM Hassan plan to go to Puntland in May.

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Visit to Ethiopia  
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¶19. (C) During a brief visit, Sharmarke planned to address security and political issues with the Government of Ethiopia. He told the Ambassador he would request that Ethiopian support for Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) be channeled through the TFG rather than directly to ASWJ fighting forces on the ground in the central regions. The Prime Minister worried that ASWJ, with Ethiopia's unwitting help, could become a competitor to the TFG and, potentially, a destabilizing factor in Somalia. He said he would also re-assure the Ethiopian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, whom he was scheduled to meet, of the TFG's determination to maintain good relations with Addis.

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Worried About AMISOM/Somalia Security Forces  
Donor Conference  
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¶20. (C) Sharmarke said that President Sharif's attendance at the April 22 - 23 Brussels AMISOM/Somalia Security Forces donor meeting is intended to draw attention to supporting Somalia's national security force, and he worried that the trip could be used by extremist enemies of the TFG to make it appear that President Sharif is stumping for AMISOM. The highest priority, Sharmarke stressed, must be the building of the Joint Security Forces. Only Somali forces can combat piracy and insurgency, he declared. The TFG greatly values AMISOM and wants it to stay, but its mission is to provide stability during the transition and to aid in standing up the joint security forces.

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Comment  
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¶21. (C) Sharmarke appeared energized, purposeful, and confident. He was clearly in command of the issues, and anxious that this government, unlike its largely still-born predecessors, succeed. He told the Ambassador that he has an excellent working relationship with Sheikh Sharif.  
RANNEBERGER